ARMY CHAPLAINS FOR THE CORPS OF CADETS: AN INQUIRY

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The United States Military Academy at West Point is the most significant educational institution in the history of the United States Army. From West Point have come not only the highly visable and well-remembered military leaders of our national conflicts but also the countless other officers who have formed the heart of the Army at every level of command. This is not to take away from the many other institutions that have produced men who are as capable as the West Pointers; it is only to say that it is to West Point that the nation looks for the officer who is completely dedicated to duty, honor and country.

The military chaplain in the Army is denied the opportunity to be either the priest, minister or rabbi to the Corps of Cadets. This denial is based on a law passed by congress in 1896 and continued without serious reconsideration since that time.[1] In contrast to this both the Air Force Academy and the Naval Academy are ministered to by clergymen in uniform--military chaplains. Army chaplains generally regard this as an obvious discrimination and lack of confidence in them by the Army military structure.[2]

Crucial to this paper is the understanding that of first importance is to meet all the religious needs of the Corps of Cadets and cadre. Tradition, precedents, politics and personalities should be of insignificant consideration. In the event that no determinitive answer could be agreed

[1] Army and Navy Journal. (April 11, 1896, p. 576). Approved by Fifty-third Congress on February 18, 1896.

[2] Survey, U.S. Chaplain School, Ft. Hamilton, N.Y., by Chaplain(MAJ) Robert R. Covington, Jr., (January 1973).

upon, a decision should be based on the simple principle of justice. If there are no massive reasons why this position should be civilian then justice would demand that the contribution made by Army chaplains since World War II be recognized by making this important ministry open to Army chaplains.

For a writer to write with objectivity does not mean that one cannot have and set forth a particular position. It does mean that the writer must be fair to the subject and to all who may have an interest in the topic. Having stated this, the thesis of the paper can now be declared. The Corps of Cadets at West Point are ministered to by civilian clergymen because of the military structure at the turn of the century and should now be ministered to by the Army Chaplain Corps who can provide a ministry equal in all, and superior in some ways than the present structure at West Point.

As previously stated, the primary concern is for the religious and moral training of the cadet. This is not a new concern but has been evident throughout the history of the Military Academy. On July 4, 1802, West Point began with a student body enrollment of ten! Although a position of chaplain was called for in 1809, the first chaplain, Reverend Adam Empie, was not appointed until 1813. On 1 July, 1816, the Secretary of War approved a course of study that included the chaplain being a part of the academic faculty. Reverend Thomas Picton was the first chaplain and academic professor.[3] This proved to be a situation that came under constant attack until it was changed in 1896.[4] Typical of this concern for religion at West Point and critical of

[3]Roy J. Honeywell, Chaplains of the United States Army (Washington: Department of the Army, 1958), p. 80.

[4]Editor, Army and Navy Journal, (Washington: Department of the Army), February 22, 1896, p. 441.

the duty of the chaplain as an academic professor are statements of the Secretary of War in 1866:

> As bearing on the moral training of the cadets, the board are (sic) of opinion that it is eminently desirable that the chaplain of the post should not be a member of the academic board. In such an institution as this, with its strict surveillance and rigid discipline, there is an intrinsic incompatibility between the position of professor and that of a moral instructor. For the efficacy of the latter there should be a freedom from constraint, a mutual confidence, and a cordiality of intercourse, which cannot possibly exist under the present arrangement. The board are (sic) painfully impressed with the fact that there is no provision made for religious instruction, with the exception of public service on Sunday mornings. They believe that it is entirely compatible with the highest attainment in the art of war that the soldier should be carefully taught his relation to that Being who guides in war as well as peace, and with whom is the destiny of individuals and of nations. With these earnest convictions the board would respectfully recommend:
> First, that the chaplain be relieved from academic duties, in order that he may devote himself to exclusively the moral and religious training of the cadets.
> Second, that he be required to hold daily, in the chapel, morning prayers, upon which all who choose may have the privilege of attending.
> Third, that he be required to form a class for biblical instruction on the Sabbath Day, which the cadets may be earnestly invited to attend.
> Fourth, that as an additional inducement for the proper observance of the Sabbath, all military duties be dispensed with on that day, so far as it is consistent with proper military discipline.[5]

However, during the period between 1813 when Reverend Adam Empie was appointed and 1896 when Chaplain William Postlethwaite served his last year there were both civilian and military chaplains who served as the Cadet Chaplain. Chaplain Postlethwaite was the last chaplain to have been a commissioned officer as well as the chaplain. He had accepted a commission as a Lieutenant Colonel on January 3, 1882 that was dated December 21, 1881 and served the longest of any chaplain, to 1896.[6] This is remarkable in itself since the position had historically called for the chaplain to be in the rank

[5] Annual Report of the Secretary of War, (Washington: GPO, 1866) Reference 10, pp. 95-96.

[6] Official Army Record, (Washington: GPO, 1884), Reference 28, p. 938.

of a Captain, mounted. In fact, the Superintendent of the Military Academy in 1898 was a 1st Lieutenant Albert A. Mills![7] During the period between 1813 and 1896 military chaplains were not automatically excluded from being the West Point Chaplain. The term "clergymen" that was used to describe who should be appointed to that office was not thought of as excluding military chaplains. In fact, one of the earlier chaplains was a graduate of the Academy.[8]

Even then, during this early period, the chaplain was usually a civilian and an Episcopalian. The cementing of this tradition seems to come as a climax of the ministry of Chaplain William Postlethwaite. In all fairness, it must be said that there were two causitive factors that molded the present situation.

The first and perhaps most important factor was the number and reputation of the chaplains in the Army. In 1896 if the choice was limited to the chaplains in the Army it would be limited indeed. At that time there were only 32 chaplains on active duty. Four were "colored" and three were Catholics thus limiting the choice, in fact, to twenty-five.[9]

The reputation of chaplains at the turn of the century seems to have been the lowest in the entire history of the chaplaincy.

> On the subject of laundresses, I wish to give it as my opinion that there are only two classes of persons so useless as these. These two classes are the judges-advocate and the post chaplains. . . . I cannot leave this subject, however, without bringing to your attention what almost every intelligent officer considers the greatest incubus in the Army--that is, the post chaplains. A more useless and worthless set of drones and idlers were never fastened upon any body of men. The men who have been appointed to these positions are generally characterless men, who are no example to either the officers or men, and they bring the Christian religion into

[7] Army and Navy Journal. (Washington: GPO, 1898), p. 1089.

[8] Honeywell, op. cit.

[9] Army and Navy Journal. (Washington: GAO, 1897), 16 Oct., p. 112.

> contempt wherever they go. These are hard words to say, but when I say that the Army chaplain is a by-word and a reproach to the Army, I merely state what nearly every intelligent officer knows to be a fact. There are a few honorable exceptions. But unless we can procure refined and cultivated gentlemen to administer to the religious wants of a man, we had better have none at all.[10]

History shows that the position of chaplain was often filled through political patronage. By 1897 the condition was such that it was regarded as a "shame and disgrace."

> The history of certain of these appointments is a shame and a disgrace, and in immense damage to religion and even morals, for which the chaplains as a body should not be held responsible, or anyone else belonging to the Army, but influential politicians and the President making them.[11]

Earlier, the Secretary of War, Robert T. Lincoln, son of President Lincoln had tried to keep the age of appointment under forty but was overruled by the President who was persuaded to appoint older men who were relatives or friends of his or his cabinet members in order to secure tham a pension.[12]

Chaplain Postlethwaite also made a contribution to the situation. He is the second causitive factor. Working under a load more difficult than any other faculty member, Chaplain Postlethwaite followed a tradition of preaching twelve sermons over and over. So routine did these sermons become that one of them has become a part of the tradition at West Point.

> He did leave a lasting effect, however--from one of those sermons which every cadet heard 17 times before graduating. The text was "Felix Trembled." (Acts 24:24) At the U. S. Military Academy, a similarly jellied dessert served frequently at the Mess Hall was known to the cadets as "Felix trembled".[13]

Because of this particular historical situation and the effect of the personality involved it is little wonder that when the decision was finally

[10] Report: From the Committee on Military Affairs (Washington: GAO, 1876), Report No. 354, pp. 51-52.

[11] Army and Navy Journal. (Washington: GAO, 1897), p. 119

[12] Ibid.

[13] Lester Kinsolving, News of Religion (Staten Island Advance), November 11, 1972.

made to separate the chaplain from the academic faculty that an Army chaplain was actually considered unfit for the calling. A letter to the editor of the Army and Navy Journal printed just days after the sudden death of Chaplain Postlethwaite illustrates the concerns of those involved at West Point.

> Now that a vacancy has occurred in the office of Chaplain of the Military Academy advantage should be taken of the opportunity to separate that position from the department of history, geography and ethics, with which it has heretofore been associated. There should be a law which will provide for the appointment of a minister from civil life; to act as a chaplain for a period of four years, and that the appointment may be renewed for a second of four years, and that the appointment may be renewed for a second period if the minister proved to be acceptable to the authroities. Army Chaplains should not be available for such appointments, as unfortunately they are not usually as well fitted for such a position as ministers in civil life. The position of chaplain at West Point should never be filled by self-seekers nor place hunters; it is a position that requires a man with talents in many directions. No one should be chosen for it who is simply a good preacher or possessed of pleasant social qualities. A minister may possess these and be worthless as a chaplain. A chaplain's real work requires a sympathetic nature, and one which will enable him to place himself on the same plane, as each member of his flock, and enter into his life. At the same time he should have strong religious convictions, which his mere presence will impress on any intelligent person. So far as a mere sermon is concerned, an officer can be detailed to read the published sermon of some noted divine, and will often do it more impressively than a chaplain preaches his sermons. We hope a good man may be appointed to the vacant chaplaincy.[14]

Action at this time seemed to border on desperation. For years it had been urged that the position of chaplain be separated from the faculty. Chaplain Postlethwaite had been the resident chaplain for fifteen years. He was regarded in such a way that at his death a resolution from the faculty was printed in the Army and Navy Journal. In that same weekly article a very detailed, complementary analysis of the visiting preacher's sermon was carried in the same column! This sermon analysis of Reverend Henry T. Satterlee, Bishop-elect

[14] Z, (writer unknown), Army and Navy Journal, Feb 22, 1896, p. 441.

of Washington was longer than the faculty resolution regarding the death of the chaplain. In this writer's search through the Army and Navy Journal there has never been found one mention of the sermons of Chaplain Postlethwaite. This rather abrupt breech of good taste is not typical of West Point.

It is interesting to know that the law that was passed as a result of these concerns was approved by Congress on February 18, 1896, four days before the letter from "Z" was published in the Army and Navy Journal! The initiative had been seized! The act is as follows:

> An act to amend secion 1,309, Revised Statutes, providing a chaplain for the military academy.
> Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that so much of section 1,309 of the Revised Statutes of the United States as provides for the apointment of the United States Military Academy at West Point of "one chaplain, who shall be professor of history, geography and ethics, and one assistant professor of the same" is hereby repealed. Provided, that the duties of chaplain at the Military Academy shall hereafter be performed by a clergyman to be appointed by the President for a term of four years, and the said chaplain shall be eligible for reappointment for an additional term or terms and shall, while so serving, receive the same pay and allowances as are now allowed a Captain mounted. Approved February 18, 1896.[15]

This act seemed to do two things. First, it did separate the chaplain from the academic faculty. Second, it has been said that it denies permission of an Army chaplain to be appointed. This is probably what it intended to do with the use of the word "clergyman" in the act. However, it is the contention of this writer that the word "clergyman" is inclusive and not exclusive! Thus, there can be no legal reason to prohibit an Army chaplain from being the Chaplain to the Corps of Cadets, since the Army chaplain is first of all a "clergyman"!

[15] Ibid., April 11, 1896, p. 576.

Since that time no military chaplain has been the Cadet Chaplain. There has been one military chaplain who was appointed the Cadet Chaplain but this happened three years after he had resigned from the Army. Chaplain(CPT) Percy H. Silver became an Army Chaplain on February 2, 1901 and served with the 80th Infantry and the 13th Cavalry until 13 March 1910. On September 1, 1913 he was appointed Cadet Chaplain and continued there until 1918.[16]

The Cadet Chaplaincy has not only been dominated by civilian appointment but it has also been dominated by a particular brand of denominationalism. Prior to 1896 only two Presbyterians served as the Chaplain at West Point. All of the others are believed to have been Episcopalians.[17]

Since 1896 all of the Cadet Chaplains have been Episcopalians with the exception of the present chaplain, who is Lutheran. The Cadet Chaplaincy at West Point has been held in high regard by the Episcopalians. It seems to have been a place that made bishops, since six of the twelve chaplains went on to become bishops in the Episcopal Church. Most military chaplains regard this denominational dominance at West Point to have had an impact on the religious preference of the cadets.[18]

This obvious preference for Episcopalians, which is contrary to all those considerations involved in the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution, has often been explained away through statements that indicate that the Episcopal Church has been involved in a sacrificial way at West Point, ministering to the Cadets when no one else would. It has also been said that there has been a confidential agreement between the Episcopal Church and the military establishment to keep that position for an Episcopal minister. In all of this writer's research there has not been one thing to

[16] Official Army Record, (Washington: GPO, 1914), Reference 64, p. 116.

[17] Honeywell, Op. Cit.

[18] Survey, U. S. Chaplain School, Op. Cit.

indicate that there is any truth in either of these two statements. The only conclusion that can now be drawn from the available evidence is that this situation continued because of the personal relationships between the Army and the Episcopal establishments and without regard to the implications of this dynasty. It is to the credit of these institutions that another denomination is allowed to share that ministry.

Another consideration involved, perhaps to a lesser degree than those previously mentioned, was the lack of organization of the Chaplain Corps. It was not until July 15, 1920, that a Chief of Chaplains was appointed. During World War I Army Chaplains were procured through a colonel in the office of the Adjutant General. Therefore, the Army chaplains as an organized body could not offer an alternative to the ministry at West Point until after World War I.[19] It is not known if any Chief of Army Chaplains has attempted to officially offer the services of Army chaplains to the Corps of Cadets. If one has it can be assumed that it was rejected.

It can be concluded that after 1896 the Cadet Chaplain, though a civilian, probably wore an Army uniform since it was necessary in 1910 for the War Department to issue an order directing that the "dress of the chaplain will be that usually worn by clergymen in civil life."[20]

This brief, historical analysis would not be complete without a summary of the Catholic ministry at West Point. One must first be aware of the anti-Catholic feelings that were prevalent in Protestant America during the 1800s. For example, in 1855 the Know-Nothing party dominated the Massachusetts

[19]Honeywell, Op. Cit., p. 201.

[20]War Department, (Washington: GPO, 1910), General Orders No. 189, October 15, 1910.

legislature and passed laws that were directed toward the newly arrived Catholics, limiting Catholic freedom and opportunity in the State.[21]

Catholic cadets were probably few in number. By the turn of the century cadets and cadre who were Catholic had increased in number until the need of worship space had become a problem. Although the record indicates that the "Cadet Chapel was free to be used by all", Catholic Mass was said for the cadets and cadre in nearby Highland Falls, New York.[22]

It remained for a dynamic priest, Father O'Keefe, who was the priest at Highland Falls, to take the initiative and start a fund that would provide a Catholic Chapel for the cadets and cadre at West Point. No doubt this effort was directed toward achieving equality with the Protestant tradition at West Point. Father O'Keefe raised twenty thousand dollars and secured an initial permit from the Secretary of War to build a chapel at West Point. Secretary Lamant had granted previous such requests under a shakey provision that allowed for the construction of miscellaneous type buildings to the Catholics at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas and Fortress Monroe, Virginia and the Episcopalians at Governor's Island, New York.[23]

A strong protest was raised about West Point and the new Secretary of War in 1897, on the recommendation of the Attorney General, Joseph McKenna, revoked the license.[24] However, a little more than a year later, July 8, 1898 an act of Congress was passed that enabled not only Catholics but, "any denomination, sect or religion" to erect a building for religious worship!

[21]Leo Pfeffer, Church, State and Freedom, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1967), pp. 437-438.

[22]Army and Navy Journal, Op. Cit., November 14, 1896, p. 182.

[23]Ibid., May 29, 1897, p. 731.

[24]Ibid.

> Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the Secretary of War, in his discretion, may authorize the erection of a building for religious worship by any denomination, sect, or religion on the West Point Military Reservation: Provided, That the erection of such building will not interfere with the uses of said reservation for military purposes. Said building shall be erected without any expense whatever to the Government of the United States, and shall be removed from the reservation, or its location changed by the denomination, sect, or religious body erecting the same whenever, in the opinion of the Secretary of War, public or military necessity shall require it, and without compensation for such building or any other expense whatever to the Government. Approved, July 8, 1898.[25]

Now the myth of a "secret agreement" and the Catholic Church "owning" the ground but not the building and other similar stories can be put to rest! What is interesting to note is that the Catholics, in the best military tradition built their chapel on the hill above West Point, thus taking the high ground! It is a curious thing but not long after that it became obvious to the Protestants that they, too, needed a new chapel; the old Cadet Chapel having been built in 1836. Therefore, plans were formed and the government built an even larger, Gothic structure on land that was situated even higher than the new Catholic Chapel, thus taking the even higher ground![26]

The third chapel in regular use at West Point is the Georgian Post Chapel that was built in 1943 for the cadre and families of West Point. These three chapels represent the present systems of ministry that are in operation at West Point. In the Cadet Chapel there is the Cadet Chaplain, Protestant, with two Protestant assistants. In the Catholic Chapel of the Most Holy Trinity there are two priests who belong to the Archdiocese of New York. The Post Chapel is staffed by two Army Chaplains, Protestant. The Cadet Chaplain and his assistants and the military chaplains, all Protestants, are paid by

[25] Congressional Record, (New York Public Library, 1898). Fifty-Fifth Congress, Sess. II., Chs 635-637, p. 722.

[26] Pamphlet, The United States Military Academy, p. 3.

the government. The Catholic chaplains, all civilians, are supported by the Archdiocese of New York. This seems to be a rather obvious case of discrimination. It has been argued that it is not discrimination if that is the way the Catholic Church wants it. However, discrimination does not depend upon the willingness, even the desire, of the discriminated. It rather depends upon unequal treatment under the law. Obviously this is unequal treatment under the First Amendment to the Constitution. While it is clear that the laws that were passed in regard to religion at West Point have been constitutional, it can be suggested that the manner in which one particular denomination has controlled the office of the Cadet Chaplain and the manner in which the Catholic Church operates does do violence to the spirit, if not the letter of the First Amendment.[27]

A primary question is by does not the Catholic Church insist on equal treatment under the law? There does not beem to be any logical reason other than that of the personalities involved. The senior Priest at West Point has been there for over twenty years. Because of his personal relationships with senior officers of the Army there may be no willingness to consider a change until his departure. This seems to be the only logical reason that the Catholic Church has not insisted on a change. This writer wrote the Military Ordinariate of the Catholic Church for an answer to this question. Msgr. Joseph F. Marbach, Chancellor, replied that since the chapel at West Point is a part of the Archdiocese of New York, he would forward the letter to the civilian priest at West Point. The priest at West Point has not bothered to respond.

Now an important question can be posed. Are the religious needs of the

[27]Pfeffer, Op. Cit., pp. 128-183.

Corps of Cadets different from that of university students of the same age? No doubt the needs of the cadets include at least the same needs of the university students. However, there are additional needs that have tremendous religious implications.

A university student that graduates and accepts a job with International Business Machines will never be asked to die for IBM. Nor will he ever be expected to make moral decisions regarding the lives of other men, perhaps on a grand scale. In this modern era, technology and political situations have combined to make the task of making the correct moral decision very difficult. The trauma of the Vietnam conflict as illustrated by the resultant affliction of the Army over PX scandals, My Lai, "free fire" zones, Operation Phoenix, defoliation, body counts, and drug and racial problems make the problems of an IBM executive pale by comparison.

A second practical consideration is that the cadet, when he pins on his gold bar will begin to look to another person, a military chaplain, not only for a spiritual ministry but also as a staff advisor. This new experience with the military chaplain can be good or bad depending on the attitude that the cadet takes with him from West Point and the military chaplain that becomes "his" chaplain. It should be a point of concern to the military establishment that with the denial of the Cadet Chaplaincy to military chaplains they have, consciously or not, put the same label on them as did the writer,"Z", to the Army and Navy Journal in 1896. The point is that the times and the military chaplaincy have changed since 1896. The military establishment has the responsibility to prepare that cadet to know and respect the military chaplain.

It is submitted that the military chaplain, the pastor with the "on-th-job" experience, can best present the spiritual demands and know the problems of the military commander. It is one thing to be able to talk about

the ethics and morality of war in general in a sanitized situation and quite another to know the pain of decision, the ache of loneliness, the smell of death and the real hell of war as a personal reality. The military chaplain has had to deal with his own problems during combat; hatred for the enemy, personal and group anxiety, and the sheer insanity of it all. He will be able to relate these unique human concerns to those who will face them again in the future. Chaplain(Captain)John J. O'Connor, military chaplain at the Naval Academy said it this way:

> Having experienced the form of life and operating demans the midshipmen will one day experience, the chaplain would appear to be able to inject considerable realism into this sermons, his counseling, his guidance concerning "career" choices. This awareness of the meanings of lengthy separations from family, life at sea, etc., can be extremely helpful to midshipmen. Further, since they will encounter Navy Chaplains in their future, it is wise that they become familiar with such in the academy.[28]

This reflects the particular religious needs that are not common with the university student. It would seem, however, that there are some advantages of this ministry being civilian. The most obvious advantage is that the Academy can choose from ministers throughout the nation instead of limiting the choice to the number that are in the Chaplain Corps.

The image of West Point as a great pulpit is still present. The chapels were filled to capacity at West Point. The Cadet Chapel boasted of three morning services with a thousand cadets in each service. They were there because they were compelled to come. A recent Supreme Court refusal to hear the Appeals Court case of Anderson vs Laird has eliminated compulsory chapel attendance. Now at the Cadet Chapel there is only one service with less than a thousand present. It is safe to say that two-thirds of the Protestant cadets

[28]Letter from Chaplain(Captain) John J. O'Connor, Senior Chaplain, Annapolis, 1 March 1973.

attended chapel because they had to! It can further be expected that attendance will decline until it reaches the national level of the University students which is even fewer than the one-third that is left. With this type of attendance West Point will be another campus ministry and not a "great pulpit."

It should be remembered that military chaplains have, for many years, opposed compulsory chapel attendance as a violation of the rights of the individual. Some Naval Chaplains have even refused assignment to the Naval Academy because of compulsory attendance.[29] The General Commission on Chaplains for Armed Forces Personnel has been opposed to compulsory attendance.[30] Many military chaplains know from their personal experience how this compulsory attendance has hurt the cause of religion more than it has helped it. On a trip to West Point this winter I was walking with the Cadet Chaplain through the Officer's Club when he stopped to speak to an officer. The Chaplain noted that he had not seen the officer in chapel recently. "Hey," you forgot! I had the four year course!"

All of this is said to indicate that the days of West Point being regarded as a "great pulpit" are coming to an end. The program will have to shift to a more inclusive, dynamic, person-centered ministry that means building a congregation! The congregation will not be provided any longer. This is good if one remembers that voluntary participation is always the nature of the Christian faith. There will be no more cursing as the march is made up the hill to the chapel and no more wishing for a convenient pillar behind

[29]Robert F. McComas, The Chaplains' Ministry At The U. S. Naval Academy, (Department of the Navy: 1968), p. 8.

[30]The Chaplain Magazine, (Spring Quarter, 1973), p. 6.

which to sleep. A new generation of cadets is coming. They will be coming to the Cadet Chapel because they want to!

When the question as to the advantage of that ministry being civilian was put to Chaplain James Fort, the present Cadet Chaplain, he replied that he could think of no particular advantage. Despite his modesty it is certainly possible that there are several. Although there is a demise of West Point as a national pulpit there will still exist a greater choice within all of the Protestant churches than within the fourteen hundred man Chaplain Corps.

A second advantage might be the image of the chaplains to the cadets as civilians instead of being a part of the military. It has been suggested that the cadets will feel more comfortable talking to a minister in civilian clothes rather than one in a military uniform. The rigid strain of discipline and military bearing will be difficult to ignore if the minister is in a military uniform. Of course, the military chaplain could wear civilian clothes at West Point just as military officers often do in the Washington, D.C. area.

It has been mentioned that since the present chaplain is civilian he is not under the pressure of the military establishment and thus has more freedom of action. Without a uniform and rank, he is able to move freely through the social and military structure as one who is not outranked. This does not imply that he is free of all types of pressure. He is appointed by the President, on the recommendation of the Superintendent and reappointed by that same recommendation. Therefore, he must gain and keep the favor of the Superintendent. The assistant chaplains are under the complete control of the Superintendent since they are appointed by him. It is assumed that they are recommended by the Cadet Chaplain.

In fact, the civilian may be under more pressure. Like a football coach, his contract comes up for renewal every four years. If it is not renewed it is a big step down in the ecclesiastical world from West Point to almost any other pastorate. The military chaplain may be a little more free. If he incurs the wrath of the Superintendent he will be transferred to another assignment. He has not lost his position, only his place! It is suggested that there is a real difference.

Another possible advantage to the civilian chaplain is the possible continuity of the ministry. Chaplain Ford mentioned that one of the more meaningful pastoral experiences he had at West Point is the continuing ministry he has had to the cadets. He ministered to them for four years, married them, welcomed them back to instruct on the faculty and even ministered to their families when they have been killed in Vietnam. This continuity certainly speaks to the advantage of this pastoral position being of long duration. This is something that is not typical of the military chaplain but there is no reason why an exception could not be made if the ministry there is opened to military chaplains.

There are some advantages of the ministry there being designated to the Army Chaplain Corps. It would reduce the possibility of political and ecclesiastical influence. No Chief of Chaplains would assign chaplains there of the same denomination or allow the successor of the senior Cadet Chaplain to be of the same denomination. If he did, he would be charged with discrimination as well as political and ecclesiastical selectivity. The Cadet Chaplain could also be Roman Catholic if the Army Chaplain Corps made the assignment. It is a shame that never in the history of the Academy has a Catholic been the Cadet Chaplain!

The Catholic Chaplains at West Point would also be military thus removing the financial burden away from the Archdiocese of New York and providing the Catholic Church with equal treatment under the law. It is understood that the Superintendent at West Point has the privilege to approve or disapprove of the Catholic Priest sent there by the Archdiocese.

If the Cadet Chaplain is military and responsible for all of the religious needs of both the cadets and the cadre, a more personal, unified, ecumenical program could be developed. This will not only make an impact on the religious program, but will also be using the best principles of personnel management. It is no secret that the three chapel groups, the Catholics, the Cadets and the cadre and families have opperated three different, isolated programs in the past. Cooperation has been at a minimum over the years.

The final advantages of the military chaplain has been stated well by Chaplain O'Connor of Annapolis. The military chaplains will be the chaplains for the cadets in the future. The sooner they become acquatined the better it will be for both of them. The second, and most important advantage is that because the military chaplain has experienced what the cadets will some day experience he is more able to put the emphasis on things that will bear directly on the young man's life. He will be able to relate to him as one who has been there, seen the pain, endured the trail, finished the struggle and still has the word and sacraments of faith. This type of realism cannot be duplicated.

The final consideration for the military establishment is to understand what it is that is being said to military chaplains for as long as this ministry

is civilian. Some quotes from the January survey at the Chaplain School will illustrate what is meant:

> . . . the senior Army Commanders think so little of us that they explicitly do not want us. It takes years for a West Point graduate to appreciate a military chaplain.
>
> It affects me personally such as--"Military Chaplains in the Army are not adequate for an important assignment such as USMA."
>
> The military chaplain is, in effect, assigned a secondary role in his ministry at West Point.
>
> For years we have felt cut off from a "campus ministry", really the most important apostolate.
>
> It is an insult to the military chaplains to put a civilian in the most prestigious pulpit in the Army. Denominational representation is unfair.
>
> Aren't we good enough?
>
> If military chaplains are good enough to minister to cadets who graduate into the Army, why aren't they considered good enough to minister in the USMA. Chaplains in the Army may be considered inferior to civilians.
>
> Graduates of West Point have often indicated to me that military chaplains are a kind of second class clergy.
>
> It shows a lack of confidence in the military chaplain.
>
> When the chips are down (combat and other isolated tours) I'm O.K.--but not in public where it shows. They depend on military chaplains for the hard, real world tasks and ministries--but don't let them in on the men (young and tender) too early.
>
> This allows the cadets to avoid the real world and someone who perhaps has been there. The cadets might learn that it is possible to be a Christian and be a member of the armed forces--also that chaplains who have seen the worst are still thinking and struggling.
>
> There are chaplains equal to civilians and they should be assigned--to give representation and to provide first hand experience of men who have struggled with the mixture of faith and profession. It might also demonstrate a confidence in the Army Chaplain that some lack now.
>
> West Point is a major source of career officers. Civilian clergy is an insult to the chaplain corps. No other corps is degraded in this fashion.[31]

[31]Survey, Op. Cit.

The statements above come from military chaplains who have from six to over twenty years in the Army and ranks from Captain to Colonel. This is no new concern since Orville J. Nave, an Army Chaplain from 1882 to 1905, expressed that the limiting of the chaplaincy at West Point to civilian clergymen was an affront to him.[32]

In 1950 President Truman appointed a committee on Religion and Welfare in the Armed Forces. While no official recommendation was made the report regarding West Point is very similar to what this writer has written. Namely, that the present structure is unfair and changes are needed. The only reason that was put forth that the Cadet Chaplain should be civilian is based on the premise of compulsory attendance, i.e. since the cadets had to come they should have the best preacher possible. This reason is now passe.

Objections raised in that report include the idea that the cadets should come to know and appreciate the Army chaplain. It is strongly stated that those who object to civilian clergy also object to compulsory attendance.

It is strongly protested that "insinuation that a capable Cadet Chaplain could not be found in the regular Army chaplaincy."[33] It is pointed out that this attitude would seem to prejudice the cadet toward future staff chaplains. There is no indication that anyone paid any attention to this study. The sympathy is clearly expressed that a military chaplain is better suited for this ministry.[34]

It would seem that the time is now at hand for a study to be made of this situation. My personal conclusion is that there is no advantage that

[32] Honeywell, Op. Cit., p. 154.

[33] The President's Committee on Religion and Welfare In The Armed Forces. Frank L. Weil, Chairman (Washington: GPO, 1950), p. 36.

[34] Ibid.

the civilian clergyman has that could not be duplicated by the military chalplain and there are important advantages that the military chaplain has that cannot be duplicated in any way. When oneconsiders the past undemocratic method of selection of the Cadet Chaplain and the political and ecclesiastical pressures that were brought to bear, along with the damage to morale that the situation has done to the Chaplain Corps, plus the damage to the relationship between the cadet and the military chaplain, then it is evident changes are in order.

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